



Electricity From Sun Expensive

By Al Toby
The Arizona Republic
March 8, 2000

Solar power's attraction is based on its cleanliness and abundance. So why aren't thousands of red-tiled roofs in the Valley decorated with environmentally and energy-efficient solar panels?

"It's so attractive, but it's so expensive," says Amanda Ormond, energy director for the state's Department of Commerce. "The cost has come down but not fast enough." A solar panel costs from \$39 to \$589, based on the size and the amount of power generated.

Arizona Public Service Co. officials say they hope to make solar power more financially attractive by creating a larger demand through APS' 2-year-old Solar Partners program. The program is a partnership of the utility, its customers and the state's Energy Department. Customers who sign up at www.apsc.com pay an additional amount on their monthly bill that goes toward building and operating solar power facilities.

Tonight, the city of Scottsdale will unveil an eight-panel solar installation that was paid for by the utility's program. Solar installation units work like this: Solar panels capture sunlight. Solar cells in the panels convert the light into electricity in a process called photovoltaics. The electricity is then routed to a power grid.